# SERMON

Preach'd before the Right Honourable the

Lord-Mayor,

THE

ALDERMEN

AND

Citizens of LONDON.

At St. Mary le Bow

On Thursday, Sept. 2. 1697.

By SAMUEL PRAT, D. D. Chaplain to His Highness William Duke of Glocester, and Minister of the Savoy.

In the SAVOY:

Printed by Edw. Jones for Samuel Loundes over against Exeter-Exchange in the Strand. 1698. Rechuster

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## SERMON

Preached before the

Lord-Mayor, &c.

In the first Chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah, the former part of the 5th Verse.

Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will Revolt more and more.

HIS Prophecy begins with the Burden of Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of King Uzziah; and the Condition of the People at that time, was this.

In the Reign of Joalh, the last King fave one, the People of Judah, not-withstanding the great Prosperity with which God Almighty had Blessed 'em, Revolted, and turn'd back from the Service of God to their Old Sins.

B

This

This Joash had been wonderfully preferved out of that fatal time of Destruction, in which the whole Royal Family had like to have been extinguish'd, the Light of Judah almost quite blown out, by the tempestuous Cruelties of Athaliah: And the remembrance of that Deliverance had wrought fo upon the King and People, that for a while they betook themselves to Acts of Piety and Devotion; The House of the Lord was repaired, and the Church-Service restored to Decency and Order; for those Sacrilegious Times had alienated the Holy Things; fo you find, 2 Chron. 24. 7. They had broken up the House of God; and also all the dedicate Things of the House of the Lord did they bestow upon Baalim.

But after the Restoration, when Peace and Prosperity had produced Luxury and Wantonness, the Princes, and the great Men, Ver. 17. followed their own Lusts, and flatter'd the King into a liking of their way of living; So the King and all the People in general, Revolted from God, and return'd to their former Sins, notwithstanding all that the Prophets and

Preachers

Preachers could do; For when Wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for their Trespasses, God Almighty sent Prophets to em, to bring them again unto the Lord, and they testified against them, but they would not

give Ear, Ver. 19.

Therefore God Almighty deals with 'em by Judgments, to fee if that will Reclaim 'em. They were once Spoil'd by the Syrians, and afterwards by the Israelites, and humbled, one would think, very severely; but all this would not soften 'em, their Hearts were hardned, and Judgments could work no more upon 'em than Mercies had done.

The Prophets therefore feem to be at a stand! What will the Denouncing of Judgments signific, when the very Execution of 'cm hath had no good Effect? Thus we find the Prophet Hosea, speaking as from God, about this time, to both the Nations of Judah and Israel, chap. 6. v. 4. O Ephraim, What shall I do unto thee? O Judah, What shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. They had had B. 2

Warnings and Threatnings enough by all the Prophets of those days; thus we find the Prophet Amos in his 2d Chapter, For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall

devour the Palaces of Jerusalem.

But after all the Denunciations and Executions of God's Anger there was still no Amendment: The Prophet Isaiah therefore here in the beginning of his Prophecy, having call'd Heaven and Earth to witness, concerning God Almighty's dealing with em, Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth; and having Exprobrated their Sins and their Backflidings; instead of Denouncing any more Judgments, he Expostulates the Cafe with 'em, as if they were past all the ordinary disciplining of Providence. Why should ye be firicken any more? To what purpose would it be if God Almighty visit ye with any of those Dispensations of his Anger, which he never makes use of but in order to Reclaim, and you alas! feem to be past all Reclaiming? Let him do what he pleafeth, and repeat never so many Judgments upon you, you will still be a finful Nation, Gr. Te will Revolt more and more.

So that the words of my Text feem to infer this Proposition.

That the Nation or People, who, when God Almighty, by manifest and sufficient Signs and Tokens of his Anger, hath visited 'em sequently with Calamities and Judgments, will not Repent, but go on still in their Wickedness, are not to expect any other Overtures till an utter Ruin and final Destruction comes upon 'em.

And this Proposition, which needs no other Illustration but the Words of my Text, nor any other Proof but the Reasonableness of the Thing, I shall betake my felf forthwith to apply to this present Occasion.

We are met here together this Day to Rememorate a very remarkable instance of God's Displeasure against this sinful Nation, exercised upon this most sinful City, as the Head or Chief-Member of our great Body Politick.

And fuch a Rememoration is perhaps much more feafonable now at this long diftance of time, than it was formerly whilft the impression of it was more recent and fresh upon our Minds; because through the long-suffering and forbearance of God, that which was doubtless designed for a Judgment, or at least warning to slee from a greater Vengeance, hath now changed its Aspect, and put on the appearance of Mercy, whilst we behold our City to have Risen out of its Ashes in greater Beauty and Splendor than ever; so that we can scarce believe that to have been a Judgment, which hath conduced so much to a present show of Prosperity.

But as those among us, who were forrowful Spectators of that dismal Conslagration, we that saw the Terrours of the Lord, set in Array against us, cannot but call to Mind the manifest appearance of the suriousness of God's Anger then poured

out upon us.

So they who now feriously consider the outward Grandeur and Felicity we at prefent enjoy, and at the same time the great unworthiness in which we enjoy it all, cannot but be as much asraid of the consequents of all this long-suffering and forbearance, as we have been apprehensive of sormer Chastisements.

I have not met with many Periods of time in History, in which this Nation, and particularly this City hath been so long free from a publick Visitation. Either Plagues, or Famines; or Invasions, or Fires, or Civil Wars, or Persecutions, did for many Ages together Discipline at shorter distances of time this Revolting and Back-sliding People. Innumerable Methods hath Divine Providence made use of to Reclaim us, till at last the whole Quiver of Temporary Vengeance seem'd to be shook out at once upon us.

After a long devouring Civil War, here happened a most consuming Plague, a terrible foreign War, and a dismal Constagration, to fall out all within a small compass

of time one of another.

And if we seriously restect withall, that having return'd back again to our Sins and Impieties, in as heinous a manner as ever, the Rod of Vengeance hath of late years been shook over our Heads, and by means of a dangerous War abroad, and of Diffentions and Distractions at home, somewhat like those which were the fore-runners of the utter Destruction of Jerusalem, we

have feem'd a while to be near a final Overthrow; yet now at last all these Clouds begin as it were to blow over, and upon the prospect of a comfortable Peace, and returning Plenty, and the cicatrifing of those Wounds which Parties and Diffinctions had made; we feem, without Repentance, to be restored to Heaven's favour, Who, I say, cannot but be afraid that the Expostulation of the Prophet Isaiah is at this time applicable to us! Why should you be stricken any more? Te will Revolt more and more. Why should God Almighty be at the Expence of more Judgments to Reform you? Why should ye be Probed and Scarified and Cauteris'd any more? Since the whole head is fick, and the whole heart faint. From the ver. 5, 6. fole of the foot even unto the head, there is no

putrifying fores.

We mistake generally (I am asraid) the Nature and Ends of occasional and temporary Judgments: They many times carry more of Tenderness and Compassionalong with 'em, than they do of the deepest Displeasure or Resentments.

soundness in it, but wounds and bruises, and

God

God Almighty is not at the height of His Anger, His Indignation is not then hottest when he punishes Men so with National Calamities, as to give 'em time and opportunity afterwards of Amendment: He suffereth not at such a time His whole Displeasure to arise, but He seems to have some hopes of a People, whilst He is using Means and Remedies, tho' never so severe, for their Recovery:

But when He lays aside all such Means, when He lets em settle upon their Lees, when He seems to give em over to do what they will, to fill up the measure of their Iniquity, and to work all manner of Unrighteousness without Restraint; then they are in a fearful and desperate Case; then have they cause to wish for Judgments, and to call upon the Rocks and Hills of Calamity to fall upon em, and to hide em from a greater Wrath to come.

And God grant that this be not the present Case of this sinful People; who, after a long sorbearance, are now entring upon a New Scene of Worldly Prosperity; who have been so long without any sad effects of God's Wrath, that we can but just call 'em to Remembrance.

But the remembrance of former Judgments inflicted upon us, then when we less
expected them than we have cause now to
do, may be still, I hope, of use to the amendment of our Lives, and the preventing of a final Destruction which may otherwise fall on us. Nor would there be any
need of fresh Judgments if former ones
were so remembred as to bring us now at
length to that Repentance for which they
seem'd to have been designed.

I. And in the First Place, If Chastisements or Judgments will or can work any good effect upon us, Wby should we be stricken any more? Those which we have seen with our Eyes, or heard with our Ears, are great and many enough, to be a warning to us. We know the Causes that brought em;

Terrours that accompanied 'em.

Every one that knows any thing, that allows there is any fuch thing as Knowledge, will eafily confess that Sin is the

And the Hand that inflicted 'em; And the

cause of all Evil.

The Words of the Prophet Jeremiah to Jerufalem, may be applied to this People, Chap.

Chap. 4. Ver. 18. Thy way and thy goings have procured these things unto thee, this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reaches unto thine heart.

And as the Cause of 'em is plain, so is the Hand from which those Judgments came.

It hath been curiously enquir'd, and sometimes controverted, by what Instruments or what Accidents this great Conflagration came to be so fatal in I would we had been half so busie in finding our by what Sins it came to be inflicted.

But as to the former Enquiry, the Discovery is soon made, I can tell ye of a certain Truth, That the Destroying Angel was most concerned in it, He had the greatest Hand in it, that hath a Hand in all the National Calamities in the World, the Plagues, the Earthquakes, the Famines, the Wars, by what Accidents do all these things come to pass, Who are we to look unto for these and such like Afflictions? Are we yet to learn? Why is there any evil in the City, the evil of Punishment that is to say, and the Lord hath not done it, that mighty God whose Eyes are open

upon all the ways of the Sons of Men; To give every one according to his ways and Jer. 32. according to the fruit of his doings. 19.

Nor is it any harder to call to Mind the Terrours that former Judgments, that of this day particularly brought along with 'em-

There is none here present of us that were Eye-witnesses, and then of any years of Diferetion, but have some dismal Impressions still seal'd upon our Minds if we will turn to 'em: And they who were at the greatest distance then, may easily trace out at this day, the stupendous Circumference of those Ruins. So they who know the History, and see the sootsteps of that Judgment, may make the same use of it, if they please, to the amendment of their Lives, as if God Almighty for their Sakes. should repeat it again.

And as for the City's being Rebuilt in fuch Pomp and Magnificence as creates Wonder and Amazement in all that pass through it: This ought on the one side to excite our Obedience to God upon the Article of Gratitude; for his Pomeralone has been as Visible in the Rebuilding, as his And

his Anger was in Destroying it.

And on the other fide, to excite our Caution and Fear, lest that which is now more valuable to us than heretofore, should ever again by our Provocations, fall un-

der an untimely Fate.

Therefore, Why should we be stricken any more? Why should we provoke Almightiness to extend its self farther, since returns of Judgment, and returns of Mercy, have been as sufficient Memento's of bringing us back to our Duty, as any

Nation or People ever had ?

Surely, If ever the Judgments of God have been visible upon a City before its utter Desolation, this Day brings to our Remembrance a very great One upon us: And there is I think a greater Use which may be made of it now, than could have been immediately after it; for then, it following a mighty Plague, and coming along with a cruel War, we lay under the Discouragement of not knowing whether it was not in order to a final Excision, we knew not whether the door of Mercy was not altogether shut upon us:

But

But now we fee, That temporal Chaftisements are Mercies, or at least tenders of Mercy, though not made use of but in great Extremities, when Men will not be otherwise persuaded, but by the Terrours of the Lord, for he doth not afflist willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.

And all the distance of time between one Judgment and another, the tender of Mercy continues, and ought to be the more efficacious upon our Minds; infomuch, that the forbearance and longfuffering of God to us-ward, is like to be of a shorter continuance, by how much it hath had hitherto no very good effect upon us.

Wherever there is Sin, there must be Repentance, or Punishment following; and if the use of temporal Punishment is to prevent eternal, Why may we not as well take warning by Judgments already past, as by those to come? Why not much better, fince we know that they were fent to Reclaim, and we don't know but others

may be fent to Destroy us.

**VV**e

We may flatter our felves, That when a Judgment is turn'd into a feeming Mercy, the Offended Party is then Reconciled, That God hath then repented him of the evil, and all is well again. But let us not deceive our felves, the most we can make of such a Dispensation, without our Repentance, is, That God will vindicate his Justice when he comes to pour out the dregs of his Wrath, by such a variety of means first made use of, and such tenders of Mercy in order to our Reformation.

After that the Temple of Jerufalem had been destroy'd it was rebuilt again, and the Work carried on and improved for many Generations, to the great admiration of all Beholders, as appears by the Remarks that were made to our Saviour; and this Prosperity made 'em put so much Trust in the Temple of the Lord; the Temple of the Lord; nevertheless, that second Temple was scarce quite sinished, when a fix nal Destruction and utter Desolation came both upon the Temple and all the City, insomuch, That one stone was not left

upon another that had not been caft

The long-suffering of God to usward therefore ought to excite not only our Love but our Fear of God, instead of making us presumptuous and unmindful of his former Judgments.

II. For Secondly, If we continue unmindful of former Judgments inflicted on us, and the plain Reasons for which they were inflicted; if all that hath been done is ineffectual, Why should we be stricken any more? Why should we expect any other but a final Dispensation of God's Anger?

We were in a dangerous Case, sure, when the tender-hearted Physitian came to such Extremities, as to apply an actual Cautery upon so noble and so sensible part of the Body Politick; and if that hath done no good, but we grow worse and worse, what can be expected

but a Cutting off?

Our

Our Reformation began with Fires of Martyrdom, (let the Profelytes of that Persecuting Church disown it if they can, with the same Confidence as they seek to Evade other Charges of that Na-

turc.)

And those cruel Fires did indeed Reform our Religion and Purisie our Liturgy; but neither they, nor any other Fires, have been able to Resorm our Lives, to Purisie our Manners: We seem resolved to continue a wicked People, as we are, and why then should we be tried any more, till the great Conflagration of all things, when the Almighty shall sit as a Resorer, to separate the Silver from the Dross.

God's Spirit will not always strive with Man. The whole World had but One hundred and twenty years given 'em to Repent in, before the Flood came and swept all away except Eight Persons; and can our little corner of the World expect

a quarter of that time?

That great and populous City Niniweb had but forty days of trial given it; and may we not fay to this City, as the Ch. 3. 8. Prophet Nahum said to Niniveh: Art thoubetter than populous No, that was situate among the rivers, whose strength was insinite? Tet she was carried away, she went into captivity, her young children also were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets; and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains. Had one of the old Prophets been alive, he would perhaps have gone farther, and said, Art thou better than Sodom and Gomorrah; is thy Pride, thy sullness of Bread, and the abundance of thy Idleness less than theirs?

Maiah 1.9. And indeed, If the Lord had not left us a remnant, we, as to our City, should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like

unto Gomorrah.

It was easier for us at that time to have believed our Sins deserved it, than it is now, though our Sins are not at all less; for then we were humbled as far as we are capable of Humiliation: But it is not the greatness of the impression that Judgments make upon us which is to be consider d, but the durableness of

it; it may be faid of us as it was of the Jews, Chap. 26. ver. 18. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them, but as soon as the fiery trial was over, we Jer. 6. 32.

appeared again reprobate filver.

What are we the better for this Judgment? Hath it confumed any of the Fuel that feed our Lusts? Hath the Burning of the City leffened our Heart-burnings towards one another? Have its Flames overcome those of Lust and Wine? Are not our Tongues as much fet on Fire of Hell as ever? Don't the sulphurous stench of Oaths and Curfes, and all manner of Prophanation, teak up to Heaven still? Is not Pride forung up out of Ruin, and don't we appear dress'd up and garnish'd for a New Sacrifice? And if we are ever stricken any more, 'twill be I fear with fuch a blow, as used to fall upon the head of the Victim, 'twill be as an Holocaust offered up to Divine Justice. How can we expect otherwise, if after the severest manifestations of a Divine Providence we shut our Eyes, as if the flashes

of Vengeance had blinded instead of en-

lightned our Understandings?

Is it not just that God should make bare his Arm, and reveal Himself in something worse than hath yet befallen, if there are found divers among us that will believe no other sort of Revelation.

Strange obstinacy of Heart that this Generation labours under! One Bush on Fire reveal'd God Almighty to Moses, and yet all the Flames we have seen and selt have made no impression upon us, unless it be that we seem more hardened than ever.

Unless it be that we are grown more presumptuous, and continue in Sin, that

Mercy and Grace may abound.

I appeal to any sensible and religious. Man, that is acquainted with the World, and knows the Iniquity of the Times, whether the ordinary Conversation of many Men doth not look, as if seeing they have survived so many Judgments, they had steel'd themselves like *Pharaoh*, against the apprehensions of any more.

But

But Oh! Let the presumptuous Sinner take heed, God's Arm is not shortned:

For all this his anger is not turn'd away, Ch.10. 4.

but his arm is stretched out still. They that are insensible of Temporal Judgments have reason to look for one Eternal; and then on the other side, they, who have no sense of Eternity, ought the most of all Men to be asraid of Temporal Calamities, because their Portion of good things is in this life; and if any National Missortune should deprive them of their hopes in this World, they have nothing else to trust to, no suture Comfort in prospect.

It is high time therefore, that we feriously reflect upon our Condition; and though the Counsels of God are unfearchable, and we can never know the Methods of His Providence till they are Exhibited; yet we may make a rational Judgment of our selves, Whether we appear in our Consciences the proper Objects of God's Mercy, or His Anger.

Andi

And though it is not every body's Talent to examine the Case in General, What as a Nation or People we may deserve, yet every body can examine himself in Particular; and this being a Day of Solemn Humiliation, it can't be better spent than in such a Scrutiny; or rather let every Master of a Family, to whom the Care of his Houshold is committed, and entrusted by God, see how the Case stands with those under his own Jurisdiction, and let the Superiour Magistrates, who have a greater Trust, with so much the more Care and Watchfulness attend unto it.

They are not the Sins of our Forefathers, but our own, that come under our Consideration; let us not resume the Jewish Proverb, That the fathers have eaten sowre grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge; We have eaten and drank sowre things enough our selves, which have put that sowreness in our Tempers, especially towards one another; We have the crudities of our own Intemperance upon us, and the root of Bitterness within our felves. We have not derived for much malignity from the last Generation, as we are like to transmit unto the next.

For we don't show them that come after us any great example of amendment. Let us examine, Whether they are like to be so as we are, or no? Whether our Sons or Daughters are more Virtuously Educated than we were? Whether lesser Seeds of Vice appear in 'em?

The young People of this City, (I amafraid) promifed much better in former times than they do now; the first sprouts of Sin had not half that impudent growth.

they have now a days.

Then perhaps there was a better fort of Discipline exercised; in those times they learnt their Masters Crasts or Trades, and not their Humours and Vices; and when they grew up, they made less failings both in their Manners and their Reputation. They were Taught then to learn and labour truly to get their own Living, and to do their Duty in that State of Life unto which it pleas'd God to call 'em. There.

There were not fo many Beardless Men, who think themselves wiser and better than their Masters. They were better employ'd than to dress Fine, to disguise their Profession, to manage Intreagues, to discourse of Politicks, to be insolent in their Conversation, and all the rest of those modern Accomplishments which qualifie em to be as uncapable of any good way of living, as they are of that for which their Parents design em.

It would be more honourable for this Noble City, and more prosperous for the Nation, if every one would apply himself to his Vocation, and by treading in all the fair and easie Paths of Humility, Industry, Temperance, Chastity, Fidelity, and the like, endeavour to raise themselves to the several Degrees of Honour, and innocently aspire to the Scarlet

Robe.

Such a conduct of Life would be a support, if not a desence to em in the most disastrous times.

Nor

Nor did the Judgment we now Rememorate much affect the younger fort; but at the rate they now live, we have cause to sear such Calamities, in which they shall as much partake, as they do in the Sins of the Nation.

What can we expect when we come to consider these things? We are big at present with the Hopes of an honourable and secure Peace; But have we made our Peace with God? Are we Reconciled to Him, who maketh Wars to Cease in all the World?

Are we sure that we are qualified for the Blessings of Peace? Are we as much proof against the Temptations of Prosperity, as we have been apprehensive of the Contingencies of Adversity? In vain shall we strow our streets with Palms and Lawrels, if Jeshurun shall wax fat upon it, and kick against God. If, when we are freed from Foreign Enemies, we become Enemies to one another at home; If we still carry on the war of our members; If it makes us Proud and Presumptuous, Wanton and Petulant, Factious and Ungrateful; If we prove

prove to be of fuch Tempers that it was only the wolfs being at the door, or Hannibal at the gates, that kept us at Peace a-

mong our felves.

Rather let us not be folicitous about matters that are too high for us, but let is consider and know, in this our day, the things that make for our everlasting Peace,

before they are hid from our Eyes.

This is our Day, a Day configned to us by Providence, for the Humbling of our felves; if peradventure the Lord may be intreated for us; but if we will not humble our felves in this our day, know Miah?.iz affuredly, That the day of the Lord of Hofis

shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up

and he Shall be brought lom.

Peradventure, I fay, the Lord may yet be intreated for his People, the door of Mercy may continue open for a while, as it now Ram 3.2c ftands; For it is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not confumed, because his compassions fail not: If we betake our felves to Repentance and Amendment of Life, 'tis poffible that we may not be firicken any

more,

more, that when our Enemies have put up their Swords, the destroying Angel may

not draw his upon us.

That whatever becomes of all our earthly Tabernacles, which must moulder away, for here we have no continuing City, but seek for one that is to come; yet we our selves, our Immortal part, may be saved, so as by Fire, that is, according to the easiest Exposition, As a Brand snatch'd out of the Fire.

We have had Memento's enough not to put our Trust and Considence in any thing of this World: The World it self passes away, together with the Lusts and Desires thereof: We know that we our selves shall be dissolved, and what do we now but garnish our own Sepulches or Monuments, and trust to the Mercy or Prudence of Posterity for the upholding 'em.

But this we know likewise, That this whole City it self must undergo another Conflagration, When the heavens themselves shall be dissolved, and melt away with burning heat: And nothing then will remain of any thing we now call our own, but Probity and Virtue.

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But

But who knows how much sooner this vast and splendid City may come to be utterly lost in a National Ruin, so as to leave no more sootsteps of its Grandeur, than the Old Babylon, Troy, or Carthage, have remaining at this day; which the Builders nevertheless thought would endure as long as the Sun and Moon. No, WVe must not Build our Glory and Happiness upon Lime and Brick, and Wood and Stone, but upon other fort of Foundations; these will all crumble away, whereas Piety, Justice, Temperance, Charity will endure.

It was the Dying Ostentation of Augustus Casar, That he found the Roman City of Brick, and lest it of Marble; much better had he found it in Ashes, and so have lest it; and much better had we so lest ours, if we outvie all the Cities in the World for Iniquity as we do for Magnificence: Much better that we our selves should be saved with the loss of all we have in this World, than that we should be in danger of the Fire that will be

never quenched.

We

we have endured, and we have recover'd out of one of the greatest this World ever saw; But who among us can dwell with saish 33. the Devouring Fire! Who among us can dwell 4.

with Everlasting Burnings!

O that this Judgment had refined our Lives as well as our Streets! O that it had been like Elijah's fiery Chariot, to have mounted our Thoughts up to Heaven! O that it might still have that effect upon us! And as the Mercies of God have given us Beauty for Asbes, we might Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness! Then in-Jer. 31.28. Stead of watching over us to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy and to afflict, be might watch over us to build and to plant.

Then should we be called, The City of saidh1129, Righteousness, the faithful City; then should we be made an eternal Excellency, a joy of

many Generations.

Then should we be a name of Joy, of Praise, Jer. 33. 90. and an honour before all the nations of the Earth, which shall hear all the good that God doth unto us.

If we could Repent of our Evil Doings, and Amend our Lives, if we could have:

Peace:

Peace and Reconciliation with God, and live in Peace and Unity among our selves, then would our Jerusalem be Rebuilded, as a City that is compact together, Whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the Name of the Lord.

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TWELVES.

Dr. Horneck's Fire of the Altar. The Cry of the Son of God.. Cambridge Jests.